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EDITED BY REV. J. S. CANTWELL, D.D.

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Manuals of Faith and Duty.

No. IX.

HEAVEN.

BY

GEORGE SUMNER WEAVER, D.D.

In my Father's house are many mansions: if *it were* not *so*, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also. — JOHN xiv. 2, 3.

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It lies around us like a cloud,
A world we do not see;
Yet the sweet closing of an eye
May bring us there to be.

Its gentle breezes fan our cheek
Amid our worldly cares;
Its gentle voices whisper love,
And mingle with our prayers.

Sweet hearts around us throb and beat,
Sweet helping hands are stirred,
And palpitates the veil between
With breathings almost heard.

HARRIET BEECHER STOWE.

HEAVEN.

INTRODUCTION.

EVERYWHERE among intelligent men are there visions and hopes of a world and life better than we are experiencing in the flesh. Universal man is pained with the sense of limitation and imperfection, while he has an active consciousness of capacity for a freer and nobler activity. It is common for men to feel themselves prisoners, while they crave and cannot help craving a free life for all their powers. They long to be more and better than they are. They think and dream of ideal men and lives such as they would be glad to be and live, and feel that they have capacities for. Their limitations are always suggesting freer and larger reaches of activity. Their ignorance intimates knowledge. Their failures make success a most desirable thing. Their sinfulness and its mis-

eries make a holy life the richest of all coveted prizes. Everything on the human side of their experience so suggests an ideal excellency that they have come to live largely under the hope of such excellences to be realized by and by. Their present possessions constantly intimate richer ones to be attained. They see on before and up above a life and a world so desirable that they now live much under inspiration drawn from them.

> "Hope springs eternal in the human breast:
> Man never is, but always to be blest."

This hope is the seed of the idea of heaven. It is universal, and hence the anticipation of heaven is universal among men. It is in the nature of man; hence men in the form of men would not be men without it. Men, or creatures so called, would not be men without intellects, nor would they be men without affections; no more would they be men without the hope which gives the visions of heaven. Not revealed any more than natural is the heaven which men anticipate. Not of the Bible any more than of history is the heaven in which men have believed. It is in men to have a vision of heaven before them. Call this vision by what name we

may, it is that notion of anticipated good which their nature produces.

I. — The Bible Heaven.

This is the heaven suggested and illustrated by the great teachers of the Bible. It was not in the beginning a clear and fully revealed outline of the actual world and life of men in the spirit, so much as a recognition of such a world and life, and their wholesomeness and value to men in the flesh. The recognition grew through the ages of the growth of the Bible, till we have the consciousness and clearness of the vision of heaven given in the teachings and life of Him who is the "Light of the World."

The idea of heaven given by the great Teacher is so much a matter of faith that all local and material notions concerning it must be left to the individual conception of it. "We see through a glass darkly" in relation to it. "We walk by faith and not by sight," when we search for "the things not seen which are eternal." We must not expect positive knowledge of the things we hold by faith. The most we can expect is a rational and satisfying belief concerning that

which lies "beyond the veil." It is better, far better, to have such a belief to live and rest in, than to be harassed with perplexing doubts, or darkened in mind by the eclipse of unbelief. A vision of excellence, a faith in a life to come in which our powers shall be at their best, is a quickening incentive in the present, of immense value. A fortune to be made, a good to live for, stirs the better ambitions to energetic activity.

Understanding perfectly the limits of knowledge and the uncertainties of faith, we may ask the question:

II. — What is Heaven?

Where shall we go for an answer? Human science, philosophy, history, and learning give us only vague replies. Only the Bible will give comforting satisfaction; and even the Bible is less direct than we could wish. It seems to take it for granted that men have ideas of their own of a better life before them than the one they are now living, and to address those ideas.

The word "heaven" is used in the Bible in different senses. It was at first used in a purely material sense. It meant the open arch above the

earth, the firmament, the canopy *heaved* up above us. The first meaning given in our dictionaries is, that which is heaved or thrown up; the arch which overhangs the earth. At first it was a purely material word, which was afterward loaded with a spiritual meaning. Used in the plural, "the heavens," it means the great canopy above us, with all the worlds therein.

In this material sense heaven is always an overhanging presence, superior to the earth, stretching every way from it in infinite distance. Taking advantage of this, the Bible writers used it to express a superior state of existence, — one raised up from this present one, higher, more powerful, — a world which bears a relation to this such as the firmament does to the earth. In their conception it is a state of being, a realm of life, or world inhabited by orders of beings superior to us who live in this world. One asks, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee?" as though God fills that world with His presence and glory. The Son of God says, "I came down from Heaven," intimating that He dwelt in that world, and came down into this. It is said of Him after his death that "He ascended up into heaven," where he now lives as He did before

He came to this world; intimating that He was, and is now, an inhabitant of that higher sphere of existence. Jesus said, early in His ministry, "Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man,"[1] recognizing Him as belonging to their world, doing its work and promoting its glory. When He came into this world, it is said that angels attended his coming, as though they came with him from their higher abode. In the Lord's Prayer, "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven," intimates that it is done more perfectly by the inhabitants of that world than by those of this. Christ says, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth;"[2] this recognizes that heaven is a realm of life as distinct as the earth, and that he is the rightful moral ruler of both. In his talk with Nicodemus He says, "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but the Son of man which is in heaven,"[3] in which he recognizes that superior world as the one to which he belongs, and in the spirit of which he lived while in the flesh.

Paul speaks of Christ as to "reconcile all things unto Himself, whether they be things in

[1] John i. 51. [2] Matthew xxviii. 18. [3] John iii. 13.

earth, or things in heaven;" [1] and "to gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth;" and "that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and of things in earth," [2] as though earth and heaven are two distinct realms, or worlds, both of which are to come completely under His rule and be together the realm of His triumph. Peter recognizes the existence of this superior world in the use of the word "heavens," when he speaks of "the heavens" receiving Christ until the restitution of all things.[3] So Paul uses the same word in reference to the same world, when he speaks of it as our ultimate home: "We have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Christ clearly states the same fact when He says, "In my Father's house are many mansions." So he speaks of it in what he says of little children, — "that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." [4] And the reverent address with which He has taught us to begin our prayers, "Our Father which art in heaven," clearly points

[1] Colossians i. 20. [2] Philippians ii. 10.
[3] Acts iii. 21. [4] Matthew xviii. 10.

to such a superior abode of intelligent beings. All Christ and the apostles say of the *resurrection* alludes directly to the existence of such a world, into which men are raised from the dead; and the Revelator triumphantly recognizes it in his vision of the ultimate success of Christ's exalting work, when all in heaven and on earth should give "blessing and honor and power and glory to God and the Lamb." These and many more passages of a similar import make it clear that Christ and his early disciples, from whom the New Testament came, taught the existence of a world of spiritual life for men and angels, to which men go after they leave this life of flesh and sense, which is superior to this mortal estate in all that pertains to the intellectual and spiritual life of men. That estate they called heaven. They conceived it to be so spiritual as to be the home of God, their spiritual Father, who is a spirit. Christ called it his Father's "house of many mansions," which indicates its provisions for the many conditions of the Father's great family, — room for all, and rooms or departments adapted to the wants of all. Seeing it as the house or home of God, makes it clear that they held it to be under God's care and the influ-

ence of His Spirit. It was to them a world of light, congenial to the human spirit, adapted to its development and growth, and open to the best and highest things it is capable of attaining and enjoying.

It is presented also in the New Testament as Christ's home, from which He came, to which He went, in which He now lives and carries on His enlightening and righteous and loving work. It is presented too as the home of the angel hosts who join with Christ in his work of winning men to their Father's love, and to the joy and glory of living in the principles and privileges of His home. A home of "mansions," nothing but mansions! Surely this delightful, inspiring word could not have been used to give us any other ideas than those of plenty, — wants supplied, tastes well ordered and elevated, aspirations and affections attuned thereto, minds conformed to their environments, lives harmonious with their associations.

Christ's statement that little children in heaven "do always behold the face of my Father," taken in connection with his view of heaven as "many mansions," indicates that the mansions provide places for all, "from the least

unto the greatest;" and His remark to the thief on the cross, "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise," indicates that there are mansions for all, from the worst unto the best. Heaven, as given in these and other passages, neither lacks room for, nor adaptability to the wants of all God's family. Large and varied as human needs, must be heaven as it is sketched in the multiform language of the New Testament.

A class of New Testament phrases drawn from the word "heaven," such as "heavenly," "heavenly places," "heavenly things," "heavenly calling," "heavenly gift," "heavenly country," "heavenly Jerusalem," "heavenly host," "heavenly vision," "heavenly kingdom," are used to express the character, spirit, quality of heaven applied to things in the earth. Christ says, "My kingdom is not of this world," by which He meant, it is of heaven, — a better, richer, diviner world.

By "the kingdom of heaven," "the kingdom of God," and similar phrases, He taught of his Church, moved by the spirit, truth, and principles of heaven, about which He said so much. These phrases all give us hints, touches, ideas of heaven as the home of moral and spiritual excellences, beauty of soul, richness of love and life.

The New Testament outline of heaven makes it a morally higher world than earth, — a sphere of immortal existence, — the final home of God and His intelligent family, into which men rise from the dead when they leave this realm of mortality. The principles which govern that world are divine; and as fast and as far as men's minds become imbued with them, are they made heavenly. It is not going into that world that makes one heavenly, so much as getting the spirit and principles of it into him; no more than going into a college makes one a scholar, or going into a church makes one a Christian. That world, like this, is one in which knowledge and love and holiness have their conditions and degrees, in which its inhabitants grow in truth and power and personal worth, in which all the principles of Christ's religion are in active and powerful operation, in which Christ has the ruling power for the advancement of its inhabitants to heavenly perfection. But Christ's sway there, as here, is in the voluntary obedience and love of his subjects. He leads, enlightens, and blesses by his truth and love accepted as the soul's bread and life.

So, in answer to the question, What is heaven?

it must be said that it is that final state of God's children, in which they live by the principles of His gospel and appreciate the joy and glory of their relationship to Him and each other and the universe in which they are so blest.

III. — Where is Heaven?

This seems to be the next question to be considered. And as soon as it is asked, our minds think of heaven as *above* us. But we must remember that the word has parted with its material meaning, and assumed a spiritual one. Instead of *up in space*, it now means *up in quality*, — in mental and moral excellence, in order of being, in opportunity and advantage. "Above" must now be understood as implying superiority. Hence the heavenly world is to be thought of, not as up in space, but in condition and opportunity, in dignity, power, and worth. When Christ is said to come down from heaven, the meaning was that He humbled himself to take on an inferior condition of life; and when He was said to ascend up to heaven, the idea was that He took on a superior order of being. If the eye-witnesses who saw his departure from earth,

saw it as a material ascension into the open heavens, it was only the vision of material eyes, permitted to strike them with awe, that they might be the more solemnly impressed with such a wonderful sight, which they were not yet able to comprehend spiritually. Heaven we are to think of, therefore, not as up in space, but as a superior order of mental and moral and affectionate life.

"Our Father in heaven," where is He? Our risen Saviour, where is He? The angels in heaven who rejoice in the repentance of earthly sinners, where are they? Moses and Elias, when they talked with Jesus in the presence of Peter and John, where were they? Where were the angels which appeared at Christ's birth, baptism, and temptation? And "the cloud of witnesses" who hung in trailing glory about the apostles? And those who rolled away the stone from Joseph's new tomb, and that one who was with Peter in prison, and the one who was with John on Patmos? And where was Jesus during the forty days succeeding his resurrection when in sight and out of sight so frequently, in front and behind the veil alternately? Were not all these visits of the heavenly inhabitants made to assure

us that heaven is not far away, but near us, close about us? Christ taught us to pray, "Our Father who art in heaven," with the thought that he and his home are in close proximity to us. And Christ would have His followers believe that He, though in his Father's home, is not far away from them, for He said to them, "Lo! I am with you unto the end of the world." He said, "The kingdom of heaven is within you;" and He dwells and rules in that kingdom. In His Father's rewards and punishments of men, in his own care of his church, in the Divine Providence over all human affairs, in the fact that "the very hairs of our heads are numbered," He teaches us that heavenly influences are pressing upon us, that heavenly eyes are always beholding us, and heavenly hands are always helping us, while we dwell in the flesh; therefore would He have us believe ourselves surrounded by the heavenly world, and as really belonging to it, though our eyes are not open to its realities. By faith would He have us now live in it, accept its principles, and enter its blessed spirit of trust, love, and peace. According to His teaching, we ought to consider our minds, our real selves, as belonging to the unseen

world of spirit, as really as the angels, himself, or even his Father; for already that world is carrying on its affairs in us and around us, and we are held in the care and love of its inhabitants, and are made to grow into its life and consciously enter into its fulness by and by. Our inner life belongs to that world; and He came among us and lived as one of us, to awaken us to its realities and opportunities. Take out of the New Testament this consciousness of the spirit world about us, and how little would there be left of it! Is it hard to believe that Heaven is so near us to-day, that the spiritual realm presses its claims upon us as it did upon the first followers of Christ, and that we belong to it as really as did Moses and Elias when they appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration?

There are many things about us, besides Heaven, which we do not see, and in which we are forced to believe. We do not see the atmosphere which wraps us about in a perpetual embrace and presses us with a weight of fourteen pounds to every square inch of the surface of our bodies. We never see the electric fluid, except when disturbed, which permeates the atmosphere, — an ubiquitous essence and power, — seemingly

almost an omnipresent spirit. We never see the powerful forces of attraction which hold us and all material things in their invisible grasp, and keep spinning in their everlasting circuits the worlds that swing and shine in the spaces of immensity about us. We never see the essences of life which clothe the earth in vegetable and animal existence; nor those chemical affinities and repulsions which are all the time performing stupendous miracles about us. We do not see anything but the merest fraction of the wonderful material facts and forces which girdle us about and make the world in which we live a wonder-world to the wisest and best of us. But seeing what we do, we have learned that there is no logical explanation of the material universe about us, without admitting the existence of the spiritual universe within it which is its soul and cause. Heaven may, therefore, be near us, may be round about us, and we not have any knowledge of it through our senses. Spiritual beings may throng the spaces about us, and we not know it. But there is a consciousness in many souls of the nearness of heavenly beings and the pressure of heavenly influences upon their spirits. Prophets and souls uplifted by great earnestness

in the pursuit of spiritual enlightenment, have felt the touch of celestial intelligences and the uplift of those divine principles which make heaven superior to the earth. Christ, and those associated with Him, gave evidence of being associated with intelligences not of earth, and of drawing spiritual aid from the source of spiritual life itself. There is much evidence, from the common experience of Christian souls, of the nearness of God and His readiness to aid and comfort them, and of Christ's making good all His promises to them. They feel that heaven, with its forces of truth and faith and love, is pressing upon them, giving a witness within of what and where it is.

But some may ask, Why should spirits dwell among material things, and heaven be located in the midst of material worlds? This is a question that suggests a world of thought. Spirits are intelligent, and must delight in a knowledge of the works of God, and in all pursuits that manifest and magnify His glory. To increase in intelligence, to study to know and rejoice in the laws of God in relation to matter as well as mind, and to increase in mental as well as moral power, must be among the great objects of heavenly

living. Some of the things about us, important to know, have been mentioned. These may be open to the study of spirits. These material wonders about us which we can only contemplate from the outside, as it were, they may study from the inside. Where we can only acquire the first letter in the alphabet of knowledge, they may acquire the whole literature relating thereto, and pursue their studies with delight corresponding to their greatness. All the subtle forces that control material things, such as crystallization, distillation, fermentation, growth, decay, life, death, — all the, to us, hidden processes of production, generation, and possibly creation, may be to them objects of almost infinite pleasure, in their study of them. When we go into the fields or woods, how much there is about us of which we know nothing! Each little flower is a wonder, each plant a miracle, each tree a world of marvel. When we think how every little rootlet in the mould is gathering up the material it wants for grass, flower, fruit, gum, sap, wood, bark, and leaf, for oak, maple, elm, pine, and vine, for grape, apple, nut, and orange, — for all varieties of vegetation; how each one rejects all it does not want, choosing with a perfect intelligence what

it wants and nothing else; how every plant and tree is full of little tubes along which is carried up from the roots the liquid nourishment gathered from the soil; how every limb, twig, and leaf is receiving its share and its kind; how all the leaves are lungs for the trees and plants, breathing and separating the atmosphere and using its particles for nutriment; how they dissolve the sunshine and braid its colors into their texture: think that very likely all this, which is mystery and marvel to us, may be open to angel eyes, making of the dull plain and dark wood a field of glory to them; think of the light about us, as composed of seven colors as we see them in the rainbow, and more than likely these colors may be always distinctly visible to the angels, that all created things are glowing in their sparkling radiance, more than realizing the Revelator's gorgeous vision of the New Jerusalem; and think also of the plants and trees about us as studded with gems and glittering in this many-colored light, — for science has already informed us that the barks of trees and the stalks of grasses and grains and many of our common plants are built up of perfect crystals, laid one above another like circular monuments made of

precious stones, — we may begin to see how there may be many reasons for the location of the home of spirits in the midst of material things. These suggestions are enough to make it most likely to the rational mind, that heaven, the final home of God's intelligent family, is among His material creations, the beauties and wonders of which they may enjoy forever.

It has been a mistaken fashion of religious men to depreciate material things, to brand the earth as the home of sin and death, to hold man's alliance with materiality as a compact with evil. This mistake has helped them to feel that heaven must be far away from material things. They forget that God has shown us His wisdom, power, and goodness very largely in His material works; that in our fleshly estate He has shown us His Fatherly spirit, and made us much acquainted with spiritual things. Can we rationally conclude that in this short life only, He will use material things for our profit and joy? Will He have done with the service of material things in our behalf when we lay off our robe of flesh? Has He constructed this universe of worlds and wonders only to serve us in our infancy of being? Is it not more likely that He has higher uses to

put it to in behalf of His spirit children in their maturity ?

Is it not true that men begin their heaven where they begin to live spiritually, and begin to realize the upper state as distinct from this, where they die ? Do they not open their eyes to upper realities in the same place where they close them to lower realities ? Is it not true that they are raised into the heavenly world in the same place they die out of the earthly world ; that the change is not a change of place so much as of condition, — a dropping an old mode of life and putting on a new, a leaving the outside of things and going into the inside ?

In this world we are tethered to a narrow locality ; in that we shall have the wide freedom of God's works, — may visit place after place, world after world, people after people, and order after order of created intelligences. In the first stages of life in heaven men must awaken to what they were most awake to here, to what in heaven their earth life had prepared them for. The geologist will be prepared to see the things of his science in the new light thrown upon them by the clearer vision and the better knowledge of the men of that world ; the botanist will be a de-

lighted student of all that is involved in the life principles of creation in their lowest forms, for all will be seen under the truthful revelations of that higher world; the astronomer will see wonders in the heavens unknown to him before; and each man will see the things he knows most of in the new lights of heavenly truths and uses. Human experience will not be lost, but applied as best it may be, to life in its advanced conditions. The better and the wiser men have lived below, the richer will be the results in heaven. Earth is the vestibule of heaven. Not only in the moral and spiritual elements of the human soul, but in the intellectual and practical, is the earth life a preparation for the heavenly. The "new heavens and the new earth" which Peter anticipated are the new views and uses of both this world and the next, in which the relation of the two to each other shall be better understood, and human life accord better with the Divine requirements.

IV. — Variety in Heaven.

Many religious teachers in the past have conceived of heaven as a place of uniformity, and

have expected to find a great white throne in the centre, around which are ranged multitudes on multitudes of its people, in rows of equal and exultant saints, with harps in their hands and crowns on their heads, praising God because He has permitted them to stand there, instead of casting them down to hell. Such a heaven must be so tiresome in its monotony and so ill adapted to human wants, that it cannot be anticipated with pleasure. In this world men are varied in the make up of their souls and the experience of their lives, so that no two are alike. Each one has a personality and character of his own. Each one must go into the next life in his own personality. The variety of men in that world must be as great as in this. In changing worlds many things will, doubtless, be left behind, but not any one's personality. That is perpetual. Men will go to that world, too, in the variety of character in which they leave this. Death is said to be a leveller, but it does not level character or personality. Men will go into that world as they leave this, but will still be subject to change, to enlightenment, persuasion, reform, growth; for these belong to their spiritual nature. They are still God's children; they can think, feel, love,

and learn; and most likely with more force and excellency than here. With many hindrances left behind, and many helps made more real and forceful; with the loving Father a quickening presence; the persuasive Christ an active helper, — the light of souls; the great and good of all ages organized into His heavenly church, — the combined sainthood of the world preaching and practising the gospel and making it the law of the heavenly society; family loves renewed; according friendships kindled anew; duties made plain; privileges appreciated; opportunities opened everywhere; the realities of the spiritual life and immortality settled forever, — what shall hinder that heaven shall become the soul's glad and improving life to all God's children, and they shall reverently and affectionately make the First and Second Commandments the law of their being and the glory of the spiritual universe?

V. — Important Questions Considered.

In the first section of this volume it is maintained that the Bible constantly speaks of heaven as not far away, but near, pressing its helpful influences upon us, and especially aiding

those who believe in it to experience something of its exaltation of spirit while they yet live in the flesh. It may now be well to consider some questions about it, which come more or less directly and anxiously to us all; and to consider them in the light of practical common-sense, so far as we may. In doing this we may dismiss old-time notions of heaven as much as possible, and try to be guided by the Bible, interpreted by our common human nature.

1. *Children and Heaven.* — "Will children who die in infancy grow in heaven?" This is a mother question, a love question, asked by many anxious parents, and asked in these exact words, of the author, by a mother who had given four infant children to heaven. No question of religion or life is more momentous to her than this, touching the condition of her little ones in heaven. She expects to meet them there; but will they be grown up to know and enjoy her as their mother and nearest friend? is her query, and the query of every mother under like circumstances.

It has been said that half the human race die in childhood. However this may be, we know that many die before maturity. If they do not

grow and mature in heaven, what a world of infants that must be! The very thought of it is so objectionable that we cannot entertain it with complacency. It is in the nature of the young mind to mature. It does not change its nature in laying off the robe of flesh. Growth is not in the flesh so much as in the spirit. The law of growth has its roots in the spirit. The real child is of spirit and not of flesh. The human being is not flesh, but spirit. The solid, positive, powerful part of a man is that part which lives and acts after his dust has gone back to its kindred dust. What is substantial and enduring in a man is that in him which thinks, loves, adores. That is the part which is kindred with the heavenly world, and goes there when death cuts the flesh cord. Growth in that world is but the natural development of the powers of the mind. Heaven is a mind-world, a soul-world, a spirit-world, in which the living person grows, matures, and exercises its powers in the fullest freedom and naturalness. It is the world in which thought, affection, adoration produce the virtues and excellences of mind as its natural fruit.

Nothing else, therefore, can be expected of in-

fant children but that they will grow in heaven in mental stature and power, till they shall reach maturity; and then grow in knowledge, wisdom, and worth, as men and women do. It would seem more than probable, almost certain, that the heavenly inhabitants would institute means to nourish the young mind in its growth, — such means as are suggested by our homes, kindergartens, and schools; only better. Mind must be even more trainable there than here, because it is away from the earthly hindrances and in its natural and kindred environment. Fathers and mothers and teachers are there in vast numbers, and the parental element in all its inhabitants, to do what they can to promote a sound and harmonious growth of the young souls which are to be their companions forever. What a privilege it will be for them to join in the educational work of heaven, and be thus associated with the rising generations of the angelic hosts! Not a little of the joy of heaven will come to parent souls in this employment of their time and powers in the service of children and youth.

We are justified only in thinking of that world as real and natural, and adapted to the nature of

its inhabitants. It is such a world as they can be benefited by and enjoy. It is made for them, and they for it; and made by the same Infinite Father who so wisely adapted the things of this world to His earthly children. He has made that world for the permanent home of His children; and if a part of them go there in infancy, they will grow to maturity all the better because of the perfect adaptedness of that world to their nature, and the wise and loving help of its society.

Now, is this all supposition, conjecture, or has the Great Teacher given us good grounds for holding such views of children in heaven?

Jesus took little children in His arms and blessed them, and said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein."[1] "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven."[2]

[1] Mark x. 14, 15. [2] Matthew xviii. 3, 4.

"Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones: for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." [1]

Nothing is plainer in the New Testament than that Christ loved little children, and also held them in great esteem for their moral condition and intellectual possibilities. He set them before His disciples as patterns of humility. He held humility as a moral quality not second to any other. It is a distinguishing quality of the kingdom of heaven, which He would have His disciples possess. In this He has foreshadowed the character of heaven, and the harmony of little children who have gone there, with this quality of their heavenly home. They are at one with it.

"Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." This recognizes children as not needing conversion, but already in harmony with the life of heaven. Conversion is an intellectual as well as a moral matter. Men are converted to the true and good, — to right intellectual as well as moral conditions, to the right relations of

[1] Matthew xviii. 10.

mind to moral truth. He recognizes children in heaven as in these conditions. They are intellectually and morally right for the place. Everybody knows that there is no characteristic of the child mind more marked than its teachableness. To learn is its great passion. Its humility fits it to make the greatest use and profit of its teachableness and its opportunities. This puts the children in heaven in the best possible situation to acquire both the intellectual and moral riches of heaven. They are to go forward to the greatest and best. In this immediate connection Christ teaches that there are degrees of attainment in the kingdom of heaven, — "the least and the greatest." If in the kingdom, then in heaven itself. Now He tells us that the little children in heaven have angels who "do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." What are these angels for, if not to teach and wisely develop the minds of the children? Every child in heaven has its angel teacher, guide, and friend. What does this angelic provision indicate, if not instruction, help, development in the heavenly life? And how rich the provision when there is one teacher to every pupil! No parsimony in the heavenly school system, and

no lack of honor for teachers and their office. "Their angels do always behold the face of My Father" must indicate their nearness to the Father, the richness of their spiritual life, and the blessedness of their help to the children.

Therefore it seems clear, both from its reasonableness and from the teachings of Christ, that children in heaven are maturing in the light and love of the heavenly home, and their parents left on the earth may anticipate meeting them by and by grown to be men and women in the celestial society. Let parental thankfulness abound.

2. *How shall we know our Children?* — "But how shall we know them?" some parents anxiously ask. We must not forget that that is an intelligent and orderly world. Children are not reared in any hap-hazard way, but are doubtless instructed as to their parentage and family relations. Records of relationship may be kept, to aid the already quick memories of the people of that world. Then older family relatives, grandparents and great-grandparents and other relatives, are there, to keep active the family interests, to rejoice in the coming of their own, and to aid them in renewing their family intimacies. It

can hardly be otherwise than that family life shall be at its best in heaven. It is held sacred in earth; it is still more so in heaven. The angels of children, who have them in charge, are most likely older family relatives, who instruct them in relation to their parents and relatives left on the earth, so as to kindle and keep alive in them the family affections. Parents on the earth who fear their little ones in heaven will forget them or never know and love them, may dismiss those fears, for they do not forget their own in heaven. It is hardly believing too much, to believe that our dear ones in heaven keep watch of us on earth, at least enough to know our general movements and conditions. Our love for them does not grow cold; why should we fear that theirs for us may? Heaven is a loving place. Love is its atmosphere. Love grows rather than wanes there. It is more forgiving as well as more constant. Family love is honored and cultivated there as much more than here, as heaven is better than earth. We are therefore to dismiss our fears of being forgotten by our dear ones gone, and have all faith in love in heaven, and have no doubt of knowing them when we go to them and of being known by them.

Christ said to His disciples, "I go to prepare a place for you." This is just the mission of departing friends; they go to prepare places for their loved ones who are to follow them. They go to places their heavenly friends have made ready for them; and then they prepare places for the friends they have left behind. Love has its perfect work to do, and in no place will it do it more perfectly than in the heavenly home. There is nothing in all Christ's teaching more touching than that He would not forget His friends after He had got home, but would prepare places for them, that where He is they might be also. Just the office of love. And in this He tells us that He does not cease His work for men when He gets to heaven. He works there for men in this world. He continues to be the helping Friend of humanity, — the Father's love serving and saving men in heaven. He is not an idle Christ in heaven. His work is not done because He has left this world. And what He does for his disciples He will do for all for whom He died, — prepare places for them in heaven. And He employs others in this blessed work, and none more efficiently than the friends of those left behind.

Dear reader, have you a heart friend in heaven? Do not doubt that the blessed Christ is employing that friend to prepare a place for you. It is one of the employments of departed friends to aid in making ready for the coming of their dear ones. In this way heaven and earth are kept near together and in sympathetic interest. The angels in heaven watch over sinners in the earth, and rejoice in their repentance; Moses and Elias come back to prove they have not forgotten us, and the Saviour assures us that He goes to make places for us to be with him. Surely there is no forgetting in heaven, and no danger that friends who meet there will not know each other.

3. *Age and Earthly Decay have no Place in Heaven.* — "Will early friends who died in youth be met as gray-headed and wrinkled old people?" The answer is an emphatic *No.* In that world age has no place. In mind the younger ones mature, and then go on in mental and spiritual improvement, growing wiser and richer-souled forever. Gray-headedness, age, wrinkles, bodily infirmity, belong to this world of flesh, and not to that of spirit. We are not to think of mind in that world as taking on infirmities with the

increase of years. Infirmities look toward death; but in that world there is no death. Life, perpetual life, prevails there, which does not grow infirm with the increase of years. Here, where age weakens and deforms the body, we have a dread of years that rob us of our youthful beauty and activity, both of body and mind; but there the wisdom and worth acquired by the right use of years increase the beauty and power of the spirit. There age produces the fruits of the spirit which strengthen and enrich the soul. The older, the more beautiful, other things being equal, is the law of that world. Gray hairs, wrinkles, decrepitude, disease, and whatever is bodily do not go to that world, to deform and depress the soul. That is a spirit world, and not a body world. The spirit is God's child, and not the body. His children do not take on spiritual infirmities, like those of the body, with the increase of years. We may find it difficult to apprehend a substantial spiritual being, with power, durability, and growing capacity, without a material form; but such a being seems to be our spiritual personality. We have but a faint perception of mind, which no doubt is spiritual; yet we know that all human power is

of the mind, and all human excellence also. Therefore we are not to think of bodily frailties, like the infirmities of age, as touching at all the people of heaven. They do not live in perpetual youth, but in perpetual maturity.

"In this world old people lose mental power, memory, interest in life; and when very old, mental imbecility creeps on. Is this the condition in which they enter the immortal state?" Again the true answer is, *Most certainly not.* While the law is that men enter the next world in the condition in which they leave this, very old people are an exception, because their minds are beclouded by the infirmities of the flesh. They are not themselves. Their failing bodies have weighted them down. They neither think nor feel nor act up to their full power. They have been more and better than they now are; they are crippled with bodily age. They can truly say with Paul, "It is gain for me to die." In dying they will gain their freedom, their former power and activity, and their ability to go on in the pursuit of knowledge, the performance of duty, and the enjoyment of life. Extreme old age is certainly a misfortune. Ripe age is a blessing. With fleshly instincts and passions tamed,

worldly ambitions chastened, the whole mind enriched by a long life's experiences, the old who have lived well, are at their best. They have more of the kingdom than ever before, and live nearer to heaven. A healthy, well-lived life does not lose power till it is well along in a ripe old age. The last of a long life ought to be the best, and may be. In many cases it is. In such cases the door into heaven is ajar, and sometimes half opened, before they reach it. They live much in the spirit of the heavenly life before they enter it. This is the true way to live and pass on. A rightly lived life should reach ninety years at its best. The Apostle John, at more than ninety, was living on the border of the heavenly land, and is an example for men who would make the most of the earth life and enter heaven at their best.

Some inquire about the condition of the *insane* when they become conscious inhabitants of the world beyond. There are many in this sad plight, who close their eyes in death in a blight of mind. But what is the cause of their insanity? Probably in all cases it is a physical ailment. In many cases it is known to be; and in many cases where mental trouble leads to it,

it is known that the trouble first deranges the bodily functions. It is altogether probable that all insanity is occasioned by bodily derangement. In all such cases death is their deliverer; and they will be, when they enter the spiritual world, what they were before the eclipse of mind came upon them.

A similar view is to be taken of the multitudes of persons who die in feebleness of mind after long sicknesses. It is the material organism through which mind acts in the earth, that is weakened, rather than the mind itself. There are many cases in which it is "gain" for men to die, — in which death is a friend. It is common to fear death; but this is a false fear. It is God's door into the better world. While it is not a moral savior, it certainly saves many men from great troubles which there is no other way out of. And it is a common blessing to mankind in being the open way to better opportunities and richer fields of life. Thankful should we all be that the good Father has provided a way for our deliverance from our imprisonment in flesh and from our subjection to materiality. In few things has He shown His love more conspicuously.

VI. The Spiritual Body and the Endless Life.

It has been the prevailing belief of Christendom for the last fifteen hundred years that the bodies of men would be raised in the resurrection and reclothe their spirits, so as to make them dual in the other world. But for this there is no Scripture warrant. The resurrection taught by Christ is of the spirit and not of the body. He says that men in the resurrection state "neither marry nor are given in marriage," "they die no more," "are equal unto the angels," and "are the children of God," — all of which seems to relate to their spiritual personalities. Paul says, "Thou sowest not that body that shall be . . . but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him." "It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body." In this he seems clearly to teach that our whole personality in that state is to be spiritual, and that we are not to expect the dual form of being we have here. If we call our form there a body, it is of spirit, one in substance with the soul itself. Of the substance of spirit we know nothing; yet of its reality, of its power,

durability, superiority to materiality, we can have no doubt. We can hardly think of God as having a bodily organism. Our relationship to Him as children is in spirit. And so it seems necessary for us to think of ourselves in the spiritual state in the same form of being that He is. On this and all kindred matters we must not be dogmatic, but leave each one to think for himself. But while we may not yet see eye to eye the great things of the spirit, but must wait till we become a part of them, we must no more doubt their reality and unspeakable importance than we do our own being. We are made for them, and are to go forward to them. It is on this ground only that we can get any satisfactory explanation of our existence. We ought to have such a faith in mind — or spirit, if we call it by that name — as to believe in its existence without the aid of matter, which is less than it and inferior to it, and to anticipate for ourselves and all human beings a life, after the death of the body, which shall be freer, more perfect in the possession and activity of all its functions, intellectual, moral, affectionate, and that this life shall continue forever. If we thus accept the Bible faith and believe in ourselves, we are not to

think of material forms as having any place in that world. Christ said, "Ye believe in God: believe also in me." It may with equal force be said, "Ye believe in God and Christ: believe also in yourselves." God and Christ are spiritual beings; so are men. God and Christ have their life in the things of the spirit; so do men who have gone into the spiritual realm. It is not in our bodies that we are to believe, but in our souls.

But some ask, "Is it not difficult for us to conceive of an *endless* life? We are accustomed to see an end of everything we know anything about; is it not expecting too much to anticipate that we shall see how there shall be endless life?"

Yes, it is difficult to see how such a thing should be; yet we are obliged to believe much that we know little of. The how of many things is beyond us. The how of life itself is beyond us, and yet we know we live. We do not know we shall cease to live. The presumption is in favor of continued life. To live after death is beyond our present experience; but we have already had many new experiences, and life itself is but a succession of new experiences. Because

life without a material body will be new is not to be set down as conclusive against it, or even objectionable to it, because we live now in a wonder world which gives us new things almost daily. There is no doubt but faith in our own immortality has its difficulties. So has faith in God. Yet it is far easier to believe in God than to deny him. Reason itself has difficulties. It is often without certainty, and has to take the side of probabilities. "We see through a glass darkly now," and so have to walk much by faith. We are young, even the oldest of us, and therefore are learners. We cannot say a thing will not be because we have not known it to be. A few years ago we knew nothing of the electric light, nor the telephone, nor the telegraph; and a few years farther back our fathers knew nothing of the power and utility of steam. Our knowledge is a very late thing, and a very little thing as yet. There is a universe of facts and forces about us, of which we have yet to learn. It is very presumptuous for us to be unbelieving about so grave a matter as our continued existence.

Then as to the end of things, we are quite likely to misjudge. What seems to us an end is

in most cases a change. The years come and go, — seem to have an end ; yet they are only perpetual rounds, endless changes. It has come to be a doctrine of the scientists that matter is endless, always having been passing through different changes. And if matter is endless, with how much more reason shall we say that of mind? But we have had some experience in changes which are not *ends*. We have seen an end of infancy, but not of ourselves who were infants. Many of us have seen an end of youth, but we lived right along. Some of us have seen an end of mature physical power, but are certain that these changes have not weakened our personality ; and we feel an assurance of living on through the still greater change which we call death.

VII. Death Considered.

And what is death? We do not know. It seems to men to be an end. The Bible view, that it is only an end of the physical man, is more rational. The poet Longfellow has put it well, —

"There is no death ; what seems so is transition."

That is, a transition from one form of life to another. What is the body? We know pretty well that it is only an organization of material substances, animated with a life principle of which we know nothing. Our physiologists tell us the various physical ingredients of which the body is composed. The greater part of it is water. Now, while we know this so well, we know equally well that this physical body is not the man. This body does not think, love, hope, or believe. The hand does not think, nor the heart, nor the brain. We know almost for a certainty that the brain is the organ through which the mind thinks, as the eye is the organ through which the mind sees, the ear the organ through which it hears, and the nerves the organ through which it feels. But the brain, eye, ear, and nerves are not any part of the mind. They are all physical and perishable. They come to an end. But this is no reason for believing that mind comes to an end. Because the fire burns up the house I live in is no reason for believing that it burns me up. I may have moved into another house. The physical body is simply the house man lives in; it is no part of man himself. Man is mind; or, to put it as the Bible does, man is spirit.

But the Bible idea is that spirit thinks, loves, wills, — just the powers we ascribe to mind. The Bible says God is a spirit. So man is what God is in the substance of his being; that is, he is a spirit. And as God has no end, the legitimate inference is that man has no end. Of course, this is difficult for us to comprehend; but it is more difficult for us to conceive of mind as having an end.

This Bible view, which Longfellow has so well stated, that there is no death for man, but what seems so is transition, — or translation into another state of life which we are taught to call *heaven*, — is a delight to that hope which, another poet says, —

"Springs eternal in the human breast."

It makes death a friend of man, who introduces him to himself, his fellow-man, his Heavenly Father, and the better opportunities of the heavenly world. It is good to think of it as a door out of one department of being into another, through which all men are to pass, and that this new department is an advance upon the old one, — better in everything, so that we are all gainers in passing through the door. Paul said, "It is gain for me to die." In this he doubtless stated

the great principle that death is the open door out of earth into the spirit world, which is better for all men than this world. If this is true, all the awful diatribes that have been written of death are false and wrong. It is God's good institution for the deliverance of men from a low to a higher estate, and we are to praise Him for it.

"But about those who deny God and immortality, — has that world good for them?" The direct answer is, Not so much as it would have if they believed in it now, and made this world a life of preparation for it. Man's life, in all its stages, is a whole; and each stage is affected by the one that preceded it. Each ought to be a preparation for the one to follow. Unbelief will not affect the fact of another world, nor the fact that unbelievers are to pass through the door of death into that world as do all other men, nor the fact that they are to live forever in that world. The unbelief of men does not affect God, save to awaken His pity, nor believing men, save to inspire their desire to convert them, and sorrow for their unbelief in the things most important to them. It simply affects themselves, keeping them in the shadow of death and living

without hope or faith, thereby bringing the blight of unbelief upon all their powers of mind and heart. Unbelief in heavenly things is a kind of slow paralysis in the soul, dulling its great hopes and limiting all its aspirations to the times and things of earth. But once through the door they will be corrected of their great mistake. Their unbelief will be turned to knowledge. They will enter into the realities of the spirit world, and learn the great facts and opportunities of that higher form of life. Experience will teach them what they refused to learn any other way. God in His providence will prove better to them than they were to themselves while in their unbelief.

VIII. — What of the Wicked?

"What of the wicked who up to death had loved evil?" ask a multitude of anxious souls. And well they may; for, "What of the wicked?" is a great question in all worlds. That there is no good in wickedness, but evil and only evil, is one of the great facts of experience forced upon us. "There is no peace to the wicked," is a statement of an ancient Scripture which all the wicked

have found out to be true. Now, "What of them in the over-the-river world?" is the question. They go there in a bad state of mind, — go there in opposition to God and His holy laws and ways of life; what of them? They go there as they are, with the paralysis of wickedness upon them, with the evil of wickedness in them. The thing about wickedness which has enticed them has been its secretness, its supposed smartness, its anticipated profitableness. But over there these guises put upon it by our fleshly and animal relations are left behind. Men go there to be seen and known as they are. The spirit there has no hiding-place in flesh. It may be a burning ordeal for a while for bad men to know that their badness is visible to all, and that they are estimated at their true value by all; but it will be a profitable discipline which will teach them the unprofitableness of wickedness and the need of better things to live for. Among their first lessons will be the terrible mistakenness of their earth-life in supposing that there is good in evil. But this lesson will be pressed with vigor, for things there go for their reality and not for their pretension. The falsities of earth have a poor show there; the truth and the right press with

vigor on. The will is free there as here; but the prevalence of truth, reality, and rightness makes an atmosphere which punishes wickedness out of mind and out of life.

IX. — The Intermediate State and Judgment.

The Roman Catholic Church insists upon an intermediate state between death and heaven and hell, — a purgatory, in which wickedness shall be purged out of men so far as possible, and which shall end in sending men either to heaven or hell as their final destiny. But this, in its coarseness and failure, so far as the lost are concerned, is its chief objection. The first experience in the after-death world — the initiatory experience — must be considered intermediate and preparatory to the later attainments. With all, except the most thoroughly Christian, the early period of the heavenly life must be disciplinary, instructive, — a school preparatory to the life to be attained later on. Peter called the most disobedient of the ancient times "spirits in prison," to whom Christ preached his gospel after He went to that world. Of course He preached to them for their improvement, as

Peter says, "that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, and live according to God in the spirit."[1] In other words, Christ's preaching there had the same object that it did here, — the instruction and reformation of men. The earlier periods of the after-death life must be largely missionary periods, as the great majority of those who go there are pagans, sinners, and infants. Instruction is the first work over there. The gospel is the book of life for that world. Christians are missionaries carrying the light and law and love of God to the multitudes who have not known Him. And many Christians have so much to learn of the fundamental principles of the gospel, after they get over there, that they will be learners for a while before they can go as lights to the benighted. Many Christians will have to tarry awhile at Jerusalem for training in the gospel life. Yes, the early life on the other side may well be called "intermediate," as it is preparatory to the light and joy of heaven. Christ as the Light has an immense work to do in that world to illuminate the souls of those who go there in darkness; and his Church will find ample use for all its power along

[1] 1 Peter iii. 19.

the border-land of the heavenly world. Yet, to go there is "gain," so much of earth is left behind, so much of heavenly opportunity is gained.

Judgment in the Divine government, beyond all question, is good. In purpose, administration, and result, it is good. The goodness of God is as manifest in judgment and punishment as in reward. God loves in his stripes as truly as in any other form of blessing. All God's punishments are blessings which the punished themselves will see and gratefully acknowledge by and by. Judgment is God's pronunciation of men's moral condition, whether worthy of reward or punishment. Punishment is correction by means of chastisement. In the twelfth chapter of Hebrews we have a fine statement of God's punitive dealings with His children as follows: "We have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but He for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness. Now, no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous;

nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." This is a delightful and philosophical statement of God's corrective process, which is preceded by the statement that "whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." He is the Father in His punishments as in His other blessings, and would fail in His goodness if He withheld the correcting chastisement.

But the "separation" of the family for the perpetual banishment of a part to a black prison-house of eternal despair, is another thing for which there is no warrant for believing, in Scripture, reason, or justice. The idea of such a separation has been maintained from the parable of the Sheep and the Goats, in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew. But a careful reading of the whole discourse in which the parable occurs, and what went before it to call it out, makes it clear that the discourse related to things to transpire within the generation in which it was spoken, at the setting up of Christ's kingdom on earth, rather than at its closing in heaven. It was, too, a judgment of *nations* rather than individuals, and especially the

Jewish nation in the close of its career. The inference is clear that as Christ's own nation was judged and punished in the earth, so all nations would be. It was a this-world judgment, separation, and punishment, and not an after-death affair. That which was specially in Christ's mind in giving this parable transpired more than eighteen hundred years ago. The entire Book of Revelation sets forth this whole matter of the judgment and punishment of the Jewish people in the early days of Christ's work. Whoever does not see that this is the chief burden of the Book of Revelation, does not see its meaning. Prophecy of what was shortly to transpire, at first, it soon became history, and is now to be read as such, as are the prophecies of the Messiah in the Old Testament.

The parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus has often been used in support of this same idea of the eternal separation of men in the future world. But Christ seemed not to have had the future world in mind when he gave that parable, but the *difference between the Jews and Gentiles before and after His coming.* Before his coming the Jews were rich and powerful in spiritual things, counting the Gentiles as

beggars who ate the crumbs from their table. Soon a great change would come, when the Gentile beggar would become rich in the Gospel of Christ, when the Jew would be shut away by the great gulf of his obstinacy.

This idea of the separation of men and the eternal punishment of a part is contrary to the very spirit of the gospel as well as its plain teachings. Mankind are a family made to occupy the Father's house of many mansions, and enjoy Him forever. In their diversities and differences they are subject to the same laws, and in the long reaches of life's schooling attain the good of union with God and peace and goodwill with each other.

X. — The Dim-sightedness of Human Faith.

Talk with as many as we may of the realities of heaven, the moment we begin to consider them in detail, we shall find dimness and difficulty in most human faith. There is faith in a hereafter almost everywhere among men; but it, for the most part, lacks definiteness, clearness of conception. It seems to belong to our spiritual nature to anticipate continued being

in some form of life after death. The soul is its own prophet of continued existence. The voices of the multitude, uttering everywhere and always the hope of life after death, make the conviction of its truth a mighty one; and men rest in it securely, and question perhaps too little as to its probable details.

Paul said, "Now we see through a glass darkly;" yet he was a man of grand visions, and contemplated in much detail the life of the spirit in its freedom and power in the hereafter. The fact that men everywhere and in all ages, in overwhelming, almost universal numbers, have believed in life after death, is a mighty force in favor of the thing believed. It seems to be mind speaking out of its nature. It is certain that there is in mind an unspeakable desire to live on. Extinction of being is a forbidding thought. The hope of perpetual life is a bow of promise on every cloud. And yet this anticipation of perpetual life is not all of hope and faith. Reason joins to suggest not only its probability, but almost its certainty. Whatever reason there was for being at all, still exists for its continuance. Whatever use there ever was for men will always be. Whatever relation they

hold to God, — the author of their being, — they will always hold; whatever they are to each other, they will always be; whatever place they fill in the universe they will always fill, or it will be vacant without them. If God is their Father and needs them for a solace to His paternal love, He will always need them. If they were needed to complete the family of angelic life, they are still needed and will continue to be. That a certain glory attends human existence, there can be no doubt. Man is the master and the honor of the earth. He has added much of worth and dignity to it; brought angels here to glorify it with their presence, and won to it the Son of God to found here the kingdom of heaven. There have been grand things enacted here by men, to their honor and the glory of God. And yet these things have been done in the infancy of humanity and under the weight of earthly evils. Seeing through a cloud darkly, man has caught fine glimpses of heaven and used them to beautify and ennoble his life.

As we consider what man has been, is, and is likely to be, the reasons for his continuance and improvement increase all the time. If in the infancy of his being he has done so much

to his honor, what may he not do in his manhood, under improved conditions and ample time for his best endeavors? Admit that the flesh has terribly weighted him down, — admit that sin has paralyzed his powers, — admit that he has been his own enemy and largely defeated the best things he has undertaken, — it is still true that he has proved great capabilities in himself, and shown what he may be and do in heaven, under conditions that will hold him at his best. The heaven contemplated in Christian faith for men is the result of what is rationally to be expected from what they now are, and from what they know of God and His dealings with them. Life in heaven is not a new life, but this one continued under better conditions. Heaven is the outgrowth of earth, and man in heaven the transformation of man in the flesh. This whole thing contemplated in our faith as to what is to be when death has done its final work with us, is the rational outcome of what we now are. If there is anything that distinguishes man above everything else, it is his rationality. If he is a creature of faith, he is still more a creature of reason. Faith is not contrary to, but in a line with reason. In his faith he

has, in all races and ages and in all degrees of intelligence, contemplated a life to come as the logical outcome of what he now is; and the faith that sees the clearest and with the best satisfaction is the one that is most rational.

If this present life is the all of man, no sufficient reason for his existence can be given. He is a bubble cast upon the ocean of being to be the sport of the elements. The temporary existence of such a being is inexplicable. The creation of such powers to blot them out is childish. To kindle such hopes to extinguish in death is cruelty. Reason, therefore, is as much involved in all questions of the hereafter and heaven, as faith. It becomes us, therefore, to be patient, and think with care of the nature and necessities of our marvellous being, and not jump to conclusions that deny logic and make our life a game of chance. We must not expect to see all difficulties completely removed. The matter is one of immense significance, and we must expect to apply to it our best powers and make it the study of life, that the way may open satisfactorily before us. And not perfect satisfaction is then to be expected. The most that we can expect is that of the many theories

we may choose the best. And certainly as between the two theories of life or no life hereafter, that of life is the better; as between the two theories of God or no God, that of God is the better; as between the two theories of the salvation or damnation of men in the hereafter, that of salvation is the better; as between the two theories of the salvation of all or a part, that of the salvation of all is the better; as between Christianity in the broad view of it taken in this little volume, and no religion, Christianity is infinitely the better. It shows a present and a future for all men, a triumph for God and men over evil, a universe of mind glorified in immortal righteousness.

We must be careful, therefore, not to adopt the theory of weakness, failure, or the loss of anything worth saving. As between a future of gain or loss, we are to choose that of gain; for God is provident and gainful, and conducts His management of us and our affairs on the principle of profit to all concerned. As between a future of hope or despair, we are to choose that of hope; for all good attainments come from hopeful pursuit. We are creatures of hope, and made on the principle of development,

growth, advancement from lower to higher. As between life as we now have it, or life beyond death and above sin, there cannot be a moment of rational indecision; we all see that life under the better conditions of the Christian heaven is infinitely better. Are we going to throw away the logic of an endless life and sit down in the stupidity of death? Are we going to drown mind and all its excellences and hopes in the dismal flood of illogical scepticism? Are we going to remand ourselves to dirt, — everlasting dirt? Shall we force upon ourselves the opinion that we are only creatures of a day?

With these great hopes of heaven we have much to do ourselves. We can let difficulties overpower our faith, or we can arm faith with the logic of reason, and so rise triumphant over all doubt. It is not manly to become the slave of difficulty. The difficulties of faith are not greater than those of practical life. No good is attained without overcoming difficulty. The faith and hope of heaven are beset with the difficulties of doubt. Doubt comes in even to hinder the teaching of Paul from giving the soul full satisfaction. In relation to the human

body and its occupant, he says, "It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body." "What is a spiritual body?" Doubt at once asks, as though there were some insurmountable difficulty in the way of a spiritual body. Paul does not expect the material body to exist in that world of spirit, but such a body as is adapted to that form of being. He is particular to tell us that we are to have new bodies, and not the old ones; but we ourselves shall be the same beings, yet in new forms. The old form is corruptible, the new is incorruptible; the old is weak, the new is powerful; the old is mortal, the new is immortal; the old is material, the new is spiritual. All of which as much as says that sickness, decay, and death shall not touch us there, that the necessities of material supply shall not be upon us there, and hence we may live for other and higher aims. Life in that world is on a higher grade than in this. Its objects of pursuit are richer, its enjoyments spiritual, and its ambitions relate to divine and eternal things.

XI. — Matter and Spirit.

We know something of matter, but not much in comparison with all it is. We recognize it by all our senses, but each sense has a different aspect of it. Our first thought of matter is of solid substance. But look a little closer and we shall see that matter grades up from solid to the most ethereal substance. Water is matter which in weight and force is of great power; and water has much to do with our present form of life, four fifths of our bodies being composed of it. But water of its own accord readily passes into the form of vapor, so ethereal as not to be recognizable by any of our senses. It leaves the solid for the volatile form, — experiences a kind of resurrection, so as to exist in a risen form, giving us a realization of different forms of existence. Indeed, water has three forms of existence, — ice, water, and vapor.

Above water is another form of matter, — the atmosphere. It is as really matter as any solid substance, yet not recognizable by any of our senses, except slightly by touch. It surrounds the whole earth at a depth of forty-five miles,

and is so inwoven with our physical being that we largely live by it.

Both water and air are composed of still other material substances, still more volatile and ethereal, called the gases, which seem to us to exist on the border-land of spirit itself, they are so imperceptible to our senses. Here are several forms in which the substance of both water and air exist, teaching us to believe in much that we cannot see or handle.

Going above water, air, and their gases, we find electricity, wholly invisible and unrecognizable in its natural state, and yet the most powerful of all known physical substances. It abounds everywhere, seemingly an omnipresent agency. We are beginning to study and use it, but we know but little about it; yet it is a wonderful and mysterious agency, seemingly so closely identified with our human powers as to be used in our thinking and living. Is electricity a material substance? We cannot say. It seems marvellous and powerful enough to belong to spirit itself. We can hardly think of it as matter; and yet it must be so classified. But we almost involuntarily think of it as close to spirit, as an agency of spirit activity, as having a relation to

both matter and spirit, as a border-land element of spirit service and power.

Then what shall we say of light? Is it matter? If so, how like spirit! How it darts through space! How it glorifies all it touches! Without weight or sound, it is yet a seeming substance. It is truly a marvel which seems partially spiritual.

But there is a still more marvellous substance, or essence, which we call life, which abounds in all the world, of which we yet know nothing. *Vegetable life*, — who can tell anything of it? Men enjoy it, are benefited by it, accept its blessings with gratitude, and are yet in total ignorance of what it is. And beyond this is *animal life*, still more wonderful, apparently moved with something spiritual. And above this the *life of men* — marvel of all marvels, — partly physical and partly spiritual. The thinking, aspiring, developing power of mind, — how necessarily spiritual it seems to be! And yet there seems to be an essence of physical life separate from the spiritual. The physical and the spiritual seem to be united in man during the earth life, and to be separated at death; and these doubtless are the facts. This is the ground taken by the Bible,

and corroborated so far as it can be by the inner experience of mind in the flesh.

1. All men know that their mind looks forward and upward to continued and higher life. Their *intellects* have a great craving for knowledge, which life in the flesh only sharpens a little. There is immensity in the fields of knowledge in every direction which life in the flesh only suggests. If men cease to be at death, they are immense intellectual failures. They have attained but the merest smattering of knowledge, while infinite fields stretch before them. They go out of being while the merest children. Compared with what there is to know, we all feel that we are but the merest tyros. To live on to know more and be more is the great longing of the intellectual being.

2. The same is true of the *social nature* of man. It but begins to live in the flesh. Its friendships are but just begun. Its loves have hardly blossomed yet; their richest fruitage is on before. Their co-operative schemes of development and advancement in all that is great and good are only initiated. The great schools, governments, and churches of the spiritual peoples of humanity are only in contemplation.

Brotherhood has been realized yet only in the slightest degree. In the spiritual sphere, above the temporalities that now hinder the best associative work of men, may be anticipated the accomplishment of more and better than it is yet in the heart of man to crave.

3. In the *moral nature* of man these anticipations of coming opportunity in a spiritual order of life are still more marked. There is a great longing for a purer virtue than we are yet able to practise, for a richer usefulness to our kind than we can yet command, for a closer and more satisfactory walk with God than is possible in the flesh. There is a great craving among the followers of Christ for a realization of His gospel among the hosts of the immortal house of many mansions to which He points them with such absolute assurance. The universal incompleteness of men in the flesh, and their almost universal anticipation of something more and better in the spirit, is a natural prophecy of a spiritual order of life such as revelation has set so richly before us.

These reflections on matter and spirit indicate that from solid matter there are steps upward and upward through many grades of material

form, till spirit comes into being, to be over and superior to matter. It would seem that matter exists for spirit; that the object of all things is to give existence, scope, power, use, and enjoyment to spirit. God is a spirit over all; angels are spirits in His own realm of life; men are to be spirits, but are now in the process of development, to reach by and by their maturity as His children. All intelligence, virtue, love, power, are spiritual, and belong to the Divine order of things. The substantial, enduring, ruling realities of the universe are spiritual, and are related in Nature to God Himself. Heaven is the life and rule of the spiritual, in which God's family live conformably to His wisdom and love.

Upon this we may settle down with confidence, —that as not a particle of matter is ever lost, however many changes it may pass through, so no mind is ever lost in any of the changes through which its Maker may ordain it to pass. Little as we may know of these changes beforehand, forbidding as they may appear to us, mysterious as they may seem in prospect, we are justified by all we know of ourselves, the universe about us, and the Power that rules over us, in believing

without a doubt in our continued being and in the worth and usefulness of that being increasing forever. So here in this fact we may rest, with the glory of eternal being before us. We are not wisps of vapor to vanish in death, not mere happenings to happen out of being by and by, but are permanent entities of personal thought and power, to live on and on in the universe of which we form a conspicuous and growing part. In the world to come, this fact, immensely important and grand, will be understood in its immeasurable significance, because humanity will there get above its childhood and material toys, and will live for the things of spirit. That is a mind, — a spirit world and not a body world. In this world we live mostly for the body, — its support, health, comfort; but there we shall live for the mind, — its demands, uses, advancement. A mind life in a spirit world will be a new thing, and will of necessity open to new employments.

XII. — New Employments in Heaven.

Here our employments relate largely to material things, — food, raiment, shelter, finance,

travel, health, legal and temporal sociabilities. Even our most advanced earthly employments are loaded with temporalities. Our education and literature are of the earth, and those who pursue them as employments are as literally ensnared by the bodily and temporal necessities that accompany living on the earth, as the farmer or the housewife. Religion in the body is largely a bodily affair. In its best estate it is greatly occupied with temporalities; and those who find employment in its affairs — popes, cardinals, bishops, priests, ministers — are not a little engrossed with the cares of body, house, and purse. It is true that the employments that look to the development of the soul in its religious life in this world are so pressed by the necessities that come through the body as to be not a little controlled by them. It is next to impossible to live in this world and not be largely employed in its affairs. Its maxims of wisdom relate chiefly to its temporalities. Now, when the body, the house, the business, the society, country of earth are left, and the earth itself, it is manifest that the employment of the soul's powers must very largely take new directions and be with new affairs.

The marked distinction between earth and heaven must be that in the earth we live chiefly in and for the body; in heaven we shall live chiefly in and for the mind. Indeed, heaven in its essential principles and experiences must be mentally realized. God must be enjoyed as He is realized in the mind's contemplation of Him. Christ may be our associate, teacher, friend in heaven, but our best enjoyment of Him will be from the enlightening, uplifting, heaven-making work of His truths, principles, and love in our minds. Men may be seen and dwelt with as companions, and loved as our own kind, but they will be most enjoyed for the light and love and helpfulness of their minds in their influence in ours. The universe may be seen and studied, but it will be enjoyed most for what it reveals to our minds of God and His interest in His intelligent and aspiring family. Life in heaven is a mind-life, or soul-life, or spirit-life, if any enjoy these terms better. The whole man is spirit. Therefore his employments will be such as pertain to spirit-life. The present faculties of the mind may be expected to continue, so there may be a variety of employments. The pursuit of knowledge in its almost endless forms, the study

of men in their vast variety, the development of power in all its kinds, the work of instruction which will be endless in its variety and scope, and the endless helpfulness of each other will give ample scope for useful and intense employment. The work of reconstructing thought, opinion, life, must be immense. The shaping of ourselves to the new conditions, the acquainting ourselves with the practical affairs of the new life, the climbing up to the outlooks of spirit society, must give intense employment to all our powers. The worlds of men, ancient and modern, are there, all being wrought into the new life and conformed to the one law and spirit and light and love of heaven.

When we consider how little we can now know of such a life as heaven must be, we see how impossible it is for us even to imagine the multitudes of employments and enjoyments to which mind will give its ever-active capacities. We must see what a learning of new employments, what a devising of new ways of using our powers, what entering into new fields of life, what experiencing of new conceptions of what we are and what we may be, there will be, especially in the earlier years of the heavenly life. There

must be much forgetting of the old, much outgrowing of what we were, much breaking of old idols and turning from old idolatries which have ensnared us. While in some respects life will go right on as we pass from earth to heaven, each one of us being conscious of our personal identity and relations, in other respects there will be great changes which will introduce us to new and wonderful things, and open to us employments to which we are little used. These changes will work transformations in us, so that we shall not long remain as we were in opinion, purpose, or character. The spirituality, newness, wonderfulness of heaven will not long be without their effects, in giving new light, tone, uplift to the mind and life. Away from its past, in a new world, the mind soon begins to come under the influences of its new environment. Soul is soul in all worlds; man is man, whatever his environments; so we must not doubt that heaven will do its own work within him.

Many people repudiate the thought of there being anything to do in heaven. To talk to them of employment in heaven is forbidding. They anticipate *rest* as the desirableness of

heaven. Nothing more laborious than song-singing and worship do they admit to their ease-promoting saint's-rest. In one sense there is truth in this view. Doubtless heaven is a rest from earthly employments. How many when they leave this world are worn out with bodily toil! Life in the flesh is a weariness to multitudes, who think of heaven as a relief from it. And they are right in this thought. But rest from earth is one thing, and idleness in heaven is another. We are not warranted in thinking of heaven as the home of idleness. Real enjoyment comes of activity. God is never idle, and we are godlike as we approach Him in loyal and loving activity.

It will be good to rest from the toils that have worn the life out of us; but it will be better to enter into activities that gladden and glorify our souls and carry light and joy to others. Not for idleness but for action, for a life of useful endeavor, are both earth and heaven. In heaven the endeavor must be of a spiritual nature, because that is a spiritual estate.

But what multiform activities shall be open to our transformed powers it is impossible for

us yet to conjecture. The statement of the great apostle that "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him," is certainly an encouragement to the hope of many and great things within the possible attainment of our powers. Instead of our spiritual estate taking us away from material things, it may take us right into the heart of the material universe, and help us to see and use it as God does, — may multiply and glorify the employments that seek out and delight in the wonders of the creation. The probabilities lie in this direction, so that we may rest in the hope of a wide and intimate acquaintance with the worlds and systems of the universe.

XIII. — "The Kingdom of Heaven."

In considering the questions and conjectures of what we may anticipate in heaven, we have, in the last two sections, been much directed by Paul's suggestion that "we now see through a glass darkly." Many will tell us that all our visions of heaven are but attempts to penetrate

an *unknown* future. It is a favorite suggestion of not a few that we know nothing of heaven, that all our outlines of its life are but guesses. It is not uncommon for Christian people even to admit that heaven is altogether a matter of faith, — that we know nothing of it. But is not this admitting too much? It is not true that nothing is known of heaven, but on the contrary much is known of it. Our hope is not a vision of the imagination so much as of a reality of our knowledge. We have the gospel of Christ; is that a fiction? Are its truths and principles things of the imagination? Are not the principles stated in the Beatitudes positive moral realities? Are not the two great Commandments as essential realities as the facts of our own or the earth's existence? Is anything in the science of matter more real than the Golden Rule, or the Heavenly Father, or the souls of men, or human brotherhood? Is not the religion of Christ as it is experienced by his genuine followers, as solid a fact as anything we know of matter? And what is that religion but an application of the things of heaven to the life of men in the earth?

As much as we know Christ we know the

things of heaven. In His teachings and life He illustrated heaven to us. His speech, conduct, and spirit were such as are common in heaven. In His loyalty to truth, duty, and love He acted heaven among men. In His sympathy, patience, helpfulness He gave us an insight into the life of heaven. In His devotion to His Father, sacrifice of self, love of men, and consecration to righteousness, He was heaven on earth. When we see Christ we see heaven; when we know Him we know heaven. Heaven is the extension and completion of His life. He is its spirit in actual life among men. He represents it, speaks for it, is its agent, and does its work on earth, that men may know its truth, its moral excellence, its uplifting power. He is its ambassador to all earthly powers and peoples, to establish its truths, laws, and principles among them. If they are intelligent and seek the information, they ought to have no difficulty in understanding Him and in getting clear conceptions of the country He represents. They ought not to be ignorant of heaven, or have any doubt of its essential realities. What Christ gave us of heaven is not to be seen through a glass darkly.

Paul had other things, and not heaven, in his mind when he said this.

It may help us to a clearer conception of Christ's country, to give a little study to His presentation of it in "the kingdom of heaven," about which He said so much. In His thought "the kingdom of heaven" stood for so much of the truth, piety, and personal worth of the inhabitants of heaven, as He could get His believers to accept and try to make real in their lives. In His frequent use of it, He so enriched this phrase with heavenliness that not a few have taken it to mean heaven itself. But a little study of it will show that He did not mean by it the Divine Country, — the spirit world, — but the knowledge of that country which He gave to men, — the principles of that country which He established in the souls of His followers, — so much of the substance of that country as He made real in the earth. He sought to charge His followers with the actual forces of heaven; and these forces ruling in them He called "the kingdom of heaven." There were authority, law, obedience, life, — all the essential elements of a kingdom, — in what He gave them. Personally, it was made up of a King and His

subjects. While its subjects were in this world, its principles and King were of heaven. To define it in modern phrase, it would be accurate to say that the kingdom of heaven is a this-world institution, organized of heavenly principles, to give men a foretaste of the heavenly way of living and a preparation for heaven itself. It is something of heaven introduced into men in the flesh. Some call it the Church, making the kingdom and the Church one. So far as the Church is actuated by the truth and spirit of Christ, it is the kingdom; but the Church, unfortunately, is not always true to Christ, — indeed, is not often true to Christ. It so mingles this world in its make-up and life as quite to hinder the heavenly principles from having their legitimate sway. It is hardly true to say that the Church is the kingdom of heaven, it is so much of flesh and sense; yet it ought to be, — it is its office to be, it was organized to be, — and much of it, or certainly some of it, is of the kingdom.

The point here made and insisted on with great earnestness is that the kingdom of heaven, as given us in the New Testament, is the body of men and women in the earth who so

follow Christ as to give the direction of their lives to the heavenly principles He taught. They are not yet made completely heavenly, but are in the process of being so made. The statements made in the first Beatitude warrant us in the view we are taking, — "Blessed *are* the poor in spirit, for theirs *is* the kingdom of heaven." *Here* and *now* they are blessed in the kingdom; and the blessing is in the heavenliness of their spiritual condition, — the taste of heaven they are now enjoying. The "mourners," "the meek," those who "hunger and thirst after righteousness," "the merciful," "the peacemakers," "the persecuted for righteousness' sake," and the "falsely reviled" are said also to be now blessed in the kingdom; and their blessing is a foretaste of heaven, a foreknowledge of heaven. Those who obey the great Commandments, who practise the Golden Rule, who make the Gospel the rule of their lives, who truly believe in and follow Christ, have an actual foreknowledge of enough of heaven to make them far from strangers to it. The whole use of the phrase "kingdom of heaven," and the whole moral appeal from it, is to give men in this world a practical, an ex-

perimental realization of heaven, so that they can anticipate it without a doubt and go forward to it in great hopefulness and good cheer. One of its aims seems to be to take away the sting of death, and glorify the evening of the earth life with the sunlight of the heavenly home.

XIV.—The Phrase as used in the New Testament.

The phrase "kingdom of heaven" is used some twenty-eight times in the New Testament, mostly by Christ Himself, always in the sense of a use of heavenly principles by men on earth. The phrase "kingdom of God," with the same meaning, is used about seventy times; so that the two occur over a hundred times, indicating the constancy of Christ's endeavor to establish the principles of heaven in the minds of His followers and to exert an influence in the earth as a preparation for heaven.

Then, if we take the definite teachings concerning conversion, reconciliation, redemption, restitution, salvation, gathering into Christ, eternal life, etc., we find they all mean the adoption of heavenly principles for the direction of human lives. Study carefully the whole New Tes-

tament, and it will be found to be a revelation of heavenly things to men in the earth for their immediate use and benefit. It is an endeavor to make them acquainted with heaven through a presentation of its principles. Our doubts and difficulties about heaven ought to vanish as we study the heavenly things taught by Christ.

Professor Drummond, of England, has lately given and published a discourse in this country, on "The Greatest Thing in the World." It is not money, office, fame, learning, or wisdom. It is not man, about whose greatness we say so much. It is the subject of Paul's thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, — Love. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not *love*, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not *love*, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not *love*, it profiteth me nothing." And so Paul goes on through this inimitable chapter, enforcing, exalting, crowning love as the greatest thing known

to men. And love is the great thing of Christ's gospel, — the heart of it. Virtue, mercy, forgiveness, are of love. Brotherhood, peace, union, civilization, progress, are of love. Salvation, eternal life, are of love. Private and public good, fellow service, saintliness, are of love. And whence comes this greatest thing, but from heaven? It is the atmosphere, life, power of heaven. "God is love," and heaven is His home. Love is the law, the supreme agent of all its affairs, the ruler of heaven. Shall we say that we have difficulty in perceiving the reality of heaven? Who knows anything more real than love, anything more substantial and powerful than love, anything more commanding and enduring? No lover, parent, friend, knower of his kind, doubts the reality and power of love. This is the power and reality of heaven. We know something of what love does in this world. It creates families, communities, nations, organizations for improvement, schools, churches, and means of helpfulness. See the homes, friendships, communions of men; the multiform plans for human well-being; the missionary enterprises to carry the gospel to every creature; the educational, reformatory, and chari-

table enterprises to reduce ignorance, wrong, and want! These are love's work in this world. In heaven will they not be vastly wiser and greater? Where love is supreme and commands redeemed intellect, will, and power, will not its ways and works of improvement and blessedness be grander than human mind has yet conceived? Will it leave anything undone to complete the salvation of every creature which Christ has undertaken, and make heaven the glorious home of God's redeemed family which the Bible shows it to be? See love as it exists in the mother, especially the Christian mother! What helpfulness! All mothers will be in heaven far more motherly than on earth. What will they not do to benefit and bless? See Christ's consecrated ministers spending and being spent in their love of their kind! All ministers will be in heaven more loving and dutiful than ever before; what will they not do to make it all it can be for the good of the intelligent creation? Surely heaven will be alive with good works, because love can never be idle, but must always work to bless its objects.

It is, perhaps, too common for us to expect to be transported at once to the fulness of heavenly

light and enjoyment, as though it were possible for love to work such a miracle in our behalf. It is more reasonable to suppose that we shall awaken to such knowledge, moral attainment, and affectionate experience as we have acquired in the earth life; and from what we are shall go on to more and better, as we are aided by the love and wisdom that shall come to our help. It is largely the office of this world to prepare for that, as it is the office of to-day to prepare for to-morrow, of youth to prepare for manhood, and manhood for old age. Each department in school prepares for the next. So each department in life prepares for the next, and wisdom and love work in all departments to lead on and up. We do not leave ourselves and change into vastly better and happier beings the moment we reach the world of spirit, but open our eyes to what we really are, — come to see better than before our faults and failures, as well as what we have done well and made for ourselves thereby. Death is an eye-opener, — or rather leads to a clearer-seeing life, where things are known as they are, and only real values have currency. In such a world love may do its blessed work, and if dominant, may open the

way to growths and attainments which men have not yet conceived. In such a world love may administer chastisement where due, may discipline, restrain, and so lead slowly and wisely on in the growths of righteousness, at length, to the excellencies of gospel living. All the love of that world organized and led on by Him who said to the waves of Galilee, "Peace, be still!" may lead earth-crippled souls up into strength and assured joy. How long He may be in doing it, we may not yet know.

It is perhaps too common, also, to expect to be equal in heaven, — all alike to share the same attainments and blessedness. But if we will stop to think, we shall see at once how little reason we have for such expectation. We go as we are, with our mental as well as moral differences. We start life on the other side in our appropriate personalities. Every one is himself and not another. The gospel takes men as they are in this world, and works them up, in conformity to its truth and spirit, into the most it can make of them. It takes men in the spirit world in the same way, and works them up in the same way. The gospel does not change in being used in another world, any more than men change

into other beings in going into the heavenly world. Nor does Christ change in his change of worlds. We had Him among men forty days after his death and resurrection, — in the spirit-life as He now lives and has lived since He left the flesh; and during those forty days He applied his gospel to men the same as before, loved men and helped them the same as before. He proved the after-death life to be the same as the before-death life, in personality and essential principles. Hence each man is himself after death; and as men differ in personality in this world, so they will in the next, and will not be alike or equal.

We read that "God is love," and in His house there are "many mansions." What do these many mansions mean, if not many grades, conditions of attainment, capacities, and states of blessedness, — if not variety of personality and acquirement? Surely there must be diversity in heaven, and all the more interest, usefulness, and joyfulness on account of it. But all these mansions, all this diversity, variety of attainment and condition, is in His house, His home, heaven, and He rules and lives in it in His infinite love. Paul tells us that God is ultimately to

be "all in all." We cannot see how this can be, except that he shall at last, in His house of many mansions, reign in love in the souls of His universal family. There shall be unity of love in the almost infinite variety of personality of His children.

XV. — Hints of the Higher Kingdom.

There are many hints in the New Testament of the kingdom of heaven, as in operation in the spirit world, which corroborate the view that that world is a continuation of the essential life of the men of this world, and that Christ is God's agent in that world as in this, in the work of developing the spiritual life of His children. Here is one: "We therefore labor, that whether present or absent we may be accepted of Him," — that is, that whether in the flesh or spirit, in this world or in the next, we may realize the spiritual blessedness of the gospel life. It does not say that the labor on the other side may be as effectual as on this side, but it warrants the inference that it is, as the acceptance is as satisfactory. The thought in the author's mind evidently was, that the Divine Kingdom is over the river as here, and labor for it and entrance into

it are as real and blessed there as here. The kingdom of heaven is in both worlds, and labor for it is needed and useful in both. Another hint is in Christ's statement, "He that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." He represents Himself as "the living bread" which came down from heaven, — "the bread of God," belief in which gives enduring life, which endures through this world and the next. He says, "He that cometh to me shall never hunger;" and He does not limit the coming to any world, any more than to any people. Come in this world, and the soul is welcome and blessed; and come in the next world, and it is welcome and blessed. The soul that believes on Him, though it is dead, — that is, in the spirit world, — yet shall it live. Again He says, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." [1] He does not limit this coming to any time or world or people. He had already said, "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hands." The "all things" are all people, without any limit of race, time, or world. Both the gift of all and the coming of all to Him must have included all

[1] John vi. 37.

whom God had made in His image, in the spirit life as well as in the flesh life. Still again He said: "This is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which He hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day."[1] Here, again, is the same unlimited statement. Nothing should be lost in any world. And here is added the further statement that all should be raised up, or quickened with spiritual life, "at the last day," or time, or world. He used this phrase several times in this sixth chapter of John, and every time as though He had in mind the last time, or existence, or world of men. The raising up was to be in the final life of men. A wonderful chapter is this, covering the whole life of men, the whole family of God, and the whole work of His Son from its beginning on to its final triumph in the uplifting of all souls to God.

Another hint is in this: "He that is in Christ is a new creature." There is no limit of this to the earth-world. In any world "he that is in Christ is a new creature." Paul says: "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive," — that is, be made "new creatures,"

[1] John vi. 39.

or, as Christ says, "raised up" in the spiritual life. This being "made alive in Christ" is more than passing out of this world into the next; it is by faith entering into the eternal life of Christ, or being "raised up at the last day." Christ and Paul both knew that all were not to be made alive in Christ in the earthly estate; hence it is clear, as their language implies, that they had in view the life in the spirit world also. To be made alive in Christ is a very different and a much greater thing than to be raised from death to the immortal estate. Immortal existence may be a blessing or a curse, according to the nature of that existence; but to be made alive in Christ at the last day or in the last world is the supreme blessing of heaven itself.

It is worthy of remark that life, natural life, as God gives it to His children in any world, is a great boon. We of this earth-world prize it as of inestimable value. Even in pagan lands it is often made great and beautiful. Grand and often God-approved is much of the natural life of men. All men covet its continuance in another world. And we are assured by Christ that it is to continue. There is to be a natural life of men after death, and that life is to be

immortal. And in that life men will be men with their soul-faculties complete and in full and immortal force. Pagans will, of course, come to consciousness there in pagan states of mind, and all men in the states of mind in which they left the flesh. And in that natural state there will be much worthiness of mind and life, many grand souls and grand actions which God and His redeemed children will rejoice in. But in that world as in this, there is the higher life in Christ which is open to men, and which He and all His are pressing upon men with the zeal, enthusiasm, and force of those who know its heavenly and eternal realness and power. And it is this higher life about which the New Testament talks, to which all its revelations relate, in which Christ and His Apostles were engaged in this world, and in which they are now engaged among the men of the immortal world. They are organized in a "kingdom of heaven" which is full of all heavenliness and brings down to men always the things of God, — the true order of heavenly life. They, serving the King of kings, are pressing with eternal vigilance and success the work of raising up the men of that last world to the heavenly life in Christ. The

fulness and glory of that life is but feebly conceived yet by those who have tasted the most of it in our first-world experience. As feebly as little children comprehend the grandest manhood, do the best men in Christ in this world comprehend the richness of the life in Christ, in its heavenly development and power.

Still other hints of "the kingdom of heaven" in the after-death world are found in the statements that "He is Lord of the dead and the living," meaning those of this world and the next; "that in the dispensation of the fulness of times ["the last day"] He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth;" that "wherefore God hath highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name;" that "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;" and that "every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father;" that "it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell; and having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether

they be things in earth or things in heaven;" that Christ after His death "went and preached unto the spirits in prison, . . . that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit." This being gathered into Christ in heaven, bowing the knee and confessing with the tongue in heaven, being reconciled and ruled in heaven, the same as on the earth, is equivalent to saying that the work of the kingdom of heaven is being carried on in the over-the-river world as in this world, only more efficiently, because there it is said over and over again that Christ's work is to be universally successful. Times and times again we have the New Testament assurance of the complete success of Christ in winning all souls to Himself and establishing in them the principles of His gospel. It is certain that this was not expected to be done in this world. Millions go out of this world unreconciled to Christ, unsaved, every year. There never was any hope of His doing the whole work given Him of the Father to do, in this world. At most He could only begin with any soul the great work to be done to make it a "new creature." His followers in this world

are only beginners in the Christian life, primary scholars in His great school of spiritual education. The most that is done for all Christians — even the best — is done in the other-world part of the kingdom. Christians in the flesh are yet weak in heavenly things, are much drawn aside with their lusts, much of this world, live much for sense and self. Their Great Friend has great patience with them and forgives them much, to keep them even trying to be His followers. Look at the facts just as we know them to exist, and we know the best Christians have got to be much made over-much, "raised up" in the after-death "day," to be creditable subjects of the heavenly kingdom. Unless there are immense works done on the other side for Christians who go from this side, they will be immense failures in the whiter light of that world. There is no other conclusion to rest in, except that that is the great work-world for Christ and His uplifting. If much must be done for the best that go from earth, how much for the average and feeblest Christians! If they must be patiently made over and laboriously "raised up" in that after-death "day," what labors and patience

and love must be given to the vast body of worldlings and sinners that go there to need the wisdom and help of the blessed Christ. Look at things as they are, and there is no other conclusion, if Christ is to "lose nothing," as He says, only that He and all his followers are engaged in grander missionary works in that world than any saint of this world has ever conceived. They are using grander talent, richer wisdom, nobler love, than are to be found here. See the millions that are emptied every year from this primary world into that world that holds all it gets! There are no outlets there. The work of making over is perpetual. Surely "the kingdom of heaven" which is organized here and there for this very work has a vast field for its upraising usefulness and for the employment of its millions of ministers, teachers, and helpers of Christ. Oh, the good work to be done! Oh, the Christian virtue to be applied! Oh, the grand developments of character to be wrought out! Even the babes in Christ of this world will be teachers of the gospel alphabet in that. So planned is the practical machinery of the great kingdom of redemption there, that there is something for

everybody to do who has a hand to give to the work; and while he is working for others and the Master, he is working for himself, developing his power, skill, virtue, usefulness.

So it seems that the earlier ages of the after-earth world must be devoted to what may be called the soul's intermediate life. In the earth is the primary life. Following this is the intermediate life, with which the upper department of the kingdom of heaven has to do in accomplishing Christ's special work of raising men up into God's likeness and life. This last is heaven in the highest and fullest sense suggested in the Christian teachings. In the view of these three departments of the life of God's children given us, we have everything that can stir and lead up and on an aspiring soul. The mind has ample scope; hope is quickened to its grandest anticipations; love sees men in a great family being provided for with an infinite care and kindness, while their own powers and characters are self-developed and their highest good secured. All praise to the Father of us all for life under the light of the blessed gospel of His Son!

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WEAVER, George Sumner
AUTHOR

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